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Sens. Allen, Gilbert introduce resolutions urging use of 'super driver's licenses'

LANSING – Resolutions urging that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security continue working with states to coordinate driver's licenses with new passport requirements to re-enter from Canada were introduced Thursday by Sens. Jason Allen and Jud Gilbert.

"Residents in border towns go back and forth for work and recreation," said Allen, R-Traverse City. "We don't need a burden to commerce, but yet we understand the need for greater security measures. There must be cooperation between state and federal government. The best way to begin is with a pilot program to use a 'super driver's license' that meets the requirements of both federal and state legislation, and is easy for residents of the area to use."

The U.S. Congress passed legislation last year mandating that by 2008 state driver's licenses will no longer be used for any federal purpose – such as crossing the border or boarding an airplane – unless the license meets federal requirements.

Features required by the federal government include a digital image of an individual's face, proof of legal status, mandatory information and card security features.

More than 300,000 business people, truck drivers, tourists and regular commuters travel across the Canadian – United States border daily. Each day, more than $1 billion in goods crosses the border.

"Citizens along the U.S. – Canadian border are concerned with protecting our country but they also are concerned with their daily lives being disrupted by being forced to pay for and carry multiple identifications while traveling to Canada," said Gilbert, R-Algonac. "Providing border states the option of developing one identification card would be more user friendly and financially responsible."

SCR 43, sponsored by Gilbert, and SR 121, sponsored by Allen, were both reported to the Senate Committee on Government Operations.

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